

MANAS

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THE PEOPLE CHOOSE

PROBABLY because three of the people on the panel were working journalists, a political discussion we heard recently on KPFK (listener-supported radio station in Los Angeles) got around to the role of the newspapers in American life, and having reached this subject, stayed with it until the moderator ended the program. The issues of this part of the discussion, which are fundamental, turned on the question: How can the people expect to influence the course of national decision so long as the newspapers of the country fail to provide them with reasonably impartial and reasonably complete accounts of the happenings in the world of international affairs?

The implicit assumption which makes this question important is that in a democracy "the people" have both the right and the responsibility to make their opinions and their will felt in acts of national decision. The theory of democratic government is that the people, through the mechanisms provided by the constitution, actually *make* the decisions themselves. Even after it is admitted that these mechanisms do not work very well, and that sometimes they do not work at all, it is still necessary to insist upon the theory, since all the values represented by the idea of self-government depend upon it. If the mechanisms of self-government are outdated, the people, we are obliged to say, have the power to devise new ones, through constitutional amendment and by passage of laws which will increase the efficiency of the democratic process. Any other view of the problems of the democratic process is cynical in mood, and nihilistic in effect, since there can be no self-government at all except through the capacity of the people to make and to revise the laws. If we deny that capacity, we deny the possibility of self-government.

It is obvious, therefore, that the primary and indispensable task of all those who want self-government to continue is to shield and increase the capacity for it. And it is equally obvious that the people's capacity for self-government depends in large measure on their knowledge and understanding of the problems of government. In the United States, the people expect to get this knowledge and this understanding from two sources. They get the principles of government from their education in the history of the American nation—an education provided by the country's public schools—and they get the facts about current problems of American government from various organs of mass communication—mainly the newspapers and the radio and tele-

vision networks, which are privately owned.

Examining this situation, the panelists in the KPFK program generally agreed that the newspapers do not do a very good job of providing the people with the facts and the possible meanings of the facts. No one seriously disputed this criticism, although it was admitted that some papers are better than others, and that occasionally a newspaper shows some improvement in its coverage of important news. The consensus, however, was that the newspapers and other mass media do not perform their function well enough to assure effective operation of the democratic process. At this point the discussion turned to a fixing of responsibility.

The people, one panelist asserted, get exactly what they deserve from the mass media. You can't blame the publishers, he asserted, if the people choose to support newspapers and radio stations which do not give adequate coverage of world affairs. This argument continued with one panelist pointing out that the daily press is not the only source of information available to the people. More responsible reporting can be found if you look for it. The United States has a free press and there are journals which are well staffed with men who go after the facts of current events, and often get surprisingly accurate information. These papers have experienced editorial writers who discuss for public consideration the meaning and implications of what is happening in the world. You have to make an effort, of course, to acquire such reports and to be able to compare various interpretations of their significance for national decision, but it is by no means impossible for an American citizen to be well informed.

The other side of this argument was taken by another panelist, who maintained that publishing a newspaper or operating a radio station is an activity involving more than ordinary responsibility. The victims of bad publishing ought not to be made totally responsible for their troubles. The mass media, he said, should be held to certain standards in reporting the news. A third commentator seemed to think that this proposal was both naïve and impracticable. The mass media, it was suggested, are in the hands of C. Wright Mills' "power elite," who are not about to subject themselves to any important "controls." The mass media are forms of capitalist enterprise, and the major if not the only purpose of a capitalist enterprise is to return dividends to its stockholders. If accurate and full reporting of the news

does not promise to produce more income for their owners, the mass media will neglect the news for material they find it more profitable to publish. So how can you expect the big publishers and the networks to change for the better?

This, in effect, was the end of the debate. A lot more was said, of course, but nothing of importance was added to the foregoing. As a matter of fact, little *can* be added, short of getting into deep ideological waters.

For example, if you adopt the position of the third critic, who claims that the situation is hopeless so long as "capitalists" control the press, then you must go on to advocate some other kind of control. What other kinds of control are available? We can think of two. You could have State control of the press, or you could have a co-op newspaper. State control of the press means, in practical terms, that you would probably have to have some kind of revolution, first, since it is unlikely that you could have government ownership of the press without the abolition of private enterprise generally. But what, actually, would you gain in this way, so far as accurate and complete reporting is concerned? All things being equal, you would gain only the kind of a press they have in the U.S.S.R., and most Americans would regard this as not a gain, but a loss—the loss of a "free" press. Even if you adopt a very generous view of the Soviet press, arguing that it is staffed by serious public servants who want to tell the truth, you would still be in the position of having no *independent* press to turn to for a contrary view. (No *Nation*, no *New Republic*, no *Progressive*, no KPFFK.) A State-controlled press, in the present political nature of things, would be an "infallible" press, and no American in his right mind is going to propose that self-government is possible for people who are provided the news by an "infallible" government agency.

The other alternatives remain. Either you blame the newspaper proprietors for their ineffectual reporting or you blame the people for supporting newspapers which do not give them the news. If you blame the people, you either give up or move into another area of criticism, the field of education, in hope of somehow helping the people to demand better newspapers. The trouble with turning to education is that doing this brings you into an arena already filled with controversy and difficult dilemmas. You have the same sort of problem, although in different terms. Do you blame the pupils or the teachers for the weaknesses of modern education? Or do you blame the school boards? Or—to get rid of the comparatively useless word "blame"—where do you start with your reforms? On whom do you work? What do you work *for*?

But whatever you decide to do in the field of education, this is admittedly a long-term project. Can anything be done, meantime, with the newspaper proprietors? Is it possible to change their philosophy of publishing? Could you get them to consider the possibility that they may be lowering the intelligence of the American people? Maybe. Two members of the KPFFK panel said that they had noted a marked improvement in the quality of the *Los Angeles Times* during the past six or eight months, but they couldn't understand why. One commentator thought it possible that the *Times* editors had themselves become frightened by the international situation, and had decided to become more conscientious newspapermen in the interest of simple sur-

vival. It is indeed difficult to explain a turn for the better in the commercial press. The commercial press is not supposed to have any but low, commercial motives, so how can it possibly become better?

What about the idea of a co-op newspaper? It might work, given the initial capital investment. Good staff could easily be found. It would work if enough people felt the need for a newspaper of this sort. The only parallel we can think of is in the health food business. This business is about twenty-five years old. It began when people who were having trouble with their health began to associate their trouble with the food they were eating. They demanded better food, and got it, although they had to go further to the store and pay more for what they got.

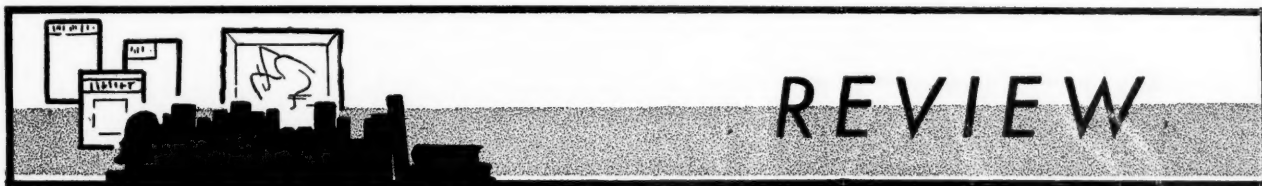
If enough people associate their cultural or political ill-health with the newspapers they read and the radio (and television) programs they listen to, then they will be willing to go further to get a better paper, and perhaps pay more (at first) for it, and to subscribe to non-commercial radio, and perhaps campaign for Pay-TV. These ventures would not have to be cooperatively owned, although they might be non-profit ventures of one sort or another. The present existence of good weekly and monthly magazines is sufficient evidence of the availability of responsible publishers in the United States. With enough support, these same publishers could grow larger, put out their papers more frequently and increase their circulation. What we are saying is that the public *does* in some measure control what it gets in the way of mass media. If the public will support good papers and good broadcasting it will have them.

Does this then mean a total vindication of the KPFFK panelist who insisted that the people get what they deserve? Not altogether. But if you start dividing the responsibility between the publishers and their readers, as you obviously ought to, you get into an area of relativities that most people imbued with democratic philosophy don't like to discuss. You have to consider who is *right*. This means that you are obliged to compare quantitative with qualitative measures of excellence. In a democracy, there is always a serious danger of getting political decision mixed up with the idea of truth, and this must be avoided.

While in a democracy, the majority always rules, this does not mean that the majority is always right. The majority can be guilty of dreadful mistakes. Democratic theory must concede this, going on to say that it is better for the majority to make its mistakes and profit by the experience than to have no opportunity to choose at all.

As defenders of democratic theory, we insist upon the right of the majority to have its way, right or wrong, in political decisions, since we know of no authority to whom we can turn for absolute certainty in righteous decision. But what happens when this insistence is transferred into the area of cultural decision? In an argument about the quality of television entertainment, an advertising executive said: "We can prove to you that people like these shows. Who are you to say that they should have anything different?" The answer given, in this instance, was:

This might be true if the people had a real choice and had a wide choice of fare. It might also be true if the measurements they were using to decide what people liked and didn't



THOSE FORTUNATE SOUTHERN NEGROES

THERE can be but little doubt that the continuing "sit-in" campaign conducted by young Negroes in behalf of fair play in the South is among the most intelligent and civilized protest movements of all times. The same must of course be said of Gandhi's organization of the Indian multitudes in the nonviolent struggle for Indian independence—the modern original of all such demonstrations. But the illiteracy of India's masses required both a stirring of the natural religious fervor of the people and carefully planned organization. Sit-in strikes by Negro students to protest restricted lunch-counter service in the South are often spontaneous, and usually effective. Moreover, as frequently reported in the liberal press, an increasing number of Negro students, both high school and college, are achieving notable self-discipline in their activities, backed by the acquisition of background knowledge on issues, precedents and the law.

From one point of view, the young Negro sit-downers, about whom we read in the *Nation*, *New Republic*, *Progressive*, *Christian Century*, etc., are favored by an almost unique opportunity in American life. Circumstances are *inviting* them to ready themselves for a quest, to embody the noblest ideals of chivalry and self-sacrifice. John Steinbeck, writing in the July 23 *Saturday Review*, conveys something of this feeling:

I think so much of those school children in Little Rock—a small handful who carry the will and conscience, the hopes and futures of millions in their arms. They have not let their people down. I think, what quiet pride their grandchildren can have in them knowing they came of such stock.

like were better than they are. In the first place, you have only one or two channels in any given place in much of the country, so that the people have very little choice.

The "cultural democracy" defense of the status quo in television programs is obviously weak, but it is impossible to overcome within the context of political argument. Because of the majority-rule principle, political argument must ignore one of the most important facts about human beings: They are *different*. Some people are more responsible than others. Some have better taste than others. Some are more interested in trying to tell the truth than they are in "moving merchandise." How these differences come to be is something of a mystery, but the fact of the differences is undeniable. These differences very largely shape our society and create most of its problems.

Every serious discussion about the quality of the newspapers—of any of the mass media—proceeds on the unspoken assumption of these differences. The people who want better papers, better programs, are plainly declaring that they know what is better. Most of them, no doubt, do know what is better, and would be able to publish better newspapers and produce better radio and television pro-

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Mr. Steinbeck then says some other things which have needed saying:

I am constantly amazed at the qualities we expect in Negroes. No race has ever offered another such high regard. . . . If there is racial trouble, we are convinced that Negroes will not strike the first blow, will not attack in the night, will not set off bombs, and our belief is borne out by events. . . . I have children, as many of you whites who read this have. Do you think your children would have the guts, the dignity, and the responsibility to go to school in Little Rock knowing they would be insulted, shoved, hated, sneered at, even spat upon day after day, and do it quietly without showing anger, petulance, or complaint? And even if they could take it, would they also get good grades?

In the *Nation* for April 2, James McBride Dabbs (*The Southern Heritage*), suggests some interesting correlations of the "equal rights" Negro campaigns. Writing of "Dime Stores and Dignity," Mr. Dabbs emphasizes with the last word of his title the characteristic of Negro nonviolent action which gains so much admiration from non-Negro observers. Part of "integrity" is a man's capacity for the individual assumption of responsibility, and, according to Mr. Dabbs, even the rabid segregationists have forgotten to blame the NAACP for what is going on:

It's rather interesting that, so far as I know, nobody has yet blamed the NAACP for the sit-ins. This is remarkable, since all other "non-Southern" actions of the last half-dozen years have been blamed on the NAACP (and the "nine old men"). The failure thus to place the blame may be due to a dawning realization in the white South that something more than a few personal devils is responsible for the changes we are involved in.

One paragraph in "Dime Stores and Dignity" is especially suggestive, providing an answer to a question we have often wondered about and which, incidentally, involves issues very similar to those brought to light in the Nuremberg trials: Just how accountable is the general populace for inhumane practices, unless and until people are made aware that the practices actually exist? Mr. Dabbs writes:

The white South is ignorant not only of causes; it is ignorant also of the present situation. I am sure that many a white Southerner has become aware only within the last month that Negroes are not served at the lunch counters of ten-cent stores. An outsider may ask, How is such ignorance possible? It is not only possible, it is human. Excluding the rather large number of whites who rarely, if ever, eat in ten-cent stores, and who therefore would have no experience of the exclusive nature of these lunch counters, the whites who do eat there accept without question the custom. Very few people question long-established customs; they live by them without being aware of them. There is therefore at least this gain in the present situation: many a white has been made aware of a privilege he didn't realize he had, and he may begin to question his right to it.

Apparently, an increasing number of white youths are beginning to do just this—question their right to privileges which Negroes of equal ability are not allowed, in schools, public libraries and lunch counters. In an article in the *Spring Dissent*, "A Cup of Coffee and a Seat," Michael

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A PARABLE

ONCE upon a time—let us say in Ancient Tibet—there was a College where the Health of the Students was being undermined by the Smoking of Opium. The Authorities therefore scheduled a series of Meetings between the Faculty and the Students, to see what could be done about it.

One student immediately pointed out that, after all, a little Opium does nobody any harm; so they set up a Research Programme to Investigate the Minimum Amount of Opium which can be Tolerated without Ill Effects. Another indicated that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the Smell of Burning Opium from Tobacco Smoke; so a second big Research Programme was begun, to Refine the Methods for Distinguishing between them at Low Concentrations. Other students asserted that the Sudden Withdrawal of Opium from Addicts would surely upset their Constitution, and suggested that only New Students should be barred from the possession of Pipes. Furthermore, it was made clear that Legislation, to be Effective, must be Enforceable; and one could therefore not forbid Opium Smoking on the Roof, where the smoke would soon be Dissipated, or in the Basement, where it was dark and Culprits might escape Undetected for a while—or indefinitely if the Basement Room were sufficiently large. Plans to construct Larger Basement Rooms were promptly slated for consideration.

The Meetings are still going on to this day. Meanwhile—Opium, anyone?
 La Jolla, California

RALPH A. LEWIN

DR. SWANN'S ARTICLE

A magazine like MANAS hardly needs a "reason" for reprinting the article the *Saturday Review* made of Dr. Swann's lecture (see *Frontiers*), but we had a special reason for wanting to reprint "The Living and the Dead." Toward the end of his discussion, Dr. Swann speaks of the importance of avoiding "all theological doctrine as a starting point" in any attempt to find verities which may do service in shaping a religious philosophy for the modern world. Quite similar suggestions appear in two recent MANAS articles—"Man the Generalizer" (July 20) and "A Plain Man's Guide to Religion" (July 27).

The trouble with "theological doctrine" is that when theologians try to connect what the doctrine says with actual human experience, it is the forms of human experi-

REVIEW—(Continued)

Walzer reports the success of a number of Negro sit-ins, going on to describe the basis on which white sympathizers are accepted by dedicated Negro leaders. In the first place, Walzer found no evidence that the young Negroes were fomenting reverse prejudice by harboring resentment of past indignities. "Sit-downers" do not look to the past, but only to the future, and with a growing enthusiasm which derives not only from the fact that they have found meaningful activity, but also from the realization that they are participating in one of the most significant revolutions of the age. Walzer's last paragraph sums up:

For the Negro student these new forms of political activity were a kind of self-testing and proving. Each new sitdown, each day of picketing, each disciplined march, each mass meeting was cause for pride and exhilaration. White students who were willing to participate were welcomed. But I attended two long meetings between Negro and white students at neighboring colleges (most of the students had never met before) and I never heard a Negro ask, or even hint, that whites should join their picket lines. It will be better for *them*, and for us, I was told, if they come unasked. The boy who said this was the same one who had told me that what he wanted was not brotherhood, but a cup of coffee. He was right of course, it is not necessary to feel fraternal towards the man you sit beside at a Woolworth's lunch counter. But what about the man you walk beside in a picket line? For it is there, I believe, on the line, that real equality is finally being won.

The young Negroes have won a lot of friends, not all of them in the North. The *New Republic*, reporting on an Edward R. Murrow telecast from the South, points out that those whom segregationists call "agitators" include some white men of means, as well as courage. Among those who continually speak out for integration are Ralph McGill, publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and William Hartsfield, now serving his sixth term as the mayor of Atlanta. As a Southern rural newspaper editor remarked, for a great many whites, "it's mind-changin' time."

ence which are distorted or warped to suit theological necessity, instead of theology being required to adapt itself to the human capacity and opportunity to understand.

To allow this would be to repeat all the old errors of organized religion. Theology, if we must have theology, should follow the experience of man. If there are rules to be followed in the making of religion, this one, surely, is the most important rule of all.

MANAS is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles — that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. MANAS is concerned, therefore, with philosophy and with practical psychology, in as direct and simple a manner as its editors and contributors can write. The word "manas" comes from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." Editorial articles are unsigned, since MANAS wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities.

The Publishers

CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

"SOCIETY" vs. YOUTH

It is rapidly becoming apparent that the young people who grow up in an affluent culture may have a harder time of it than less privileged members of a less privileged generation. For one thing, a wealthy society tends to be tightly organized, with decreasing opportunity for young people to develop individuality. As Paul Goodman puts it in *Commentary* for February: "Economically and vocationally, a very large proportion of the young people are in drastic plight. In our society as it is, there are not enough worthy jobs. But if our society, being as it is, were run more efficiently and soberly, for a majority there would soon not be any jobs at all. There is at present nearly full employment and there may be for some years, yet a vast number of young people are rationally unemployable, useless. This paradox is essential to explain their present temper." This is a problem with no easy solution.

Mr. Goodman's title is "Youth in the Organized Society," and his article constitutes a hard-headed look at the vocational opportunities before American young people. Representative of what Mr. Goodman feels to be disadvantageous to youth, if not downright dangerous, is the sort of "national employment" offered by the armed forces:

In leafing through the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, we notice that Armed Forces employ a large number. Here our young man can become involved in a world-wide demented enterprise with personnel and activities corresponding.

Thus, on the simple criteria of unquestioned utility, employing human capacities, and honor, there are not enough worthy jobs in our economy for average boys and adolescents to grow up toward. There are of course thousands of jobs that are worthy and self-justifying, and thousands that can be made so by stubborn integrity. Extraordinary intelligence or special talent, also, can often carve out a place for itself—conversely, their usual corruption and waste are all the more sickening. But by and large our economic society is *not* geared for the cultivation of its young or the attainment of important goals that they can work toward.

This is evident from the usual kind of vocational guidance, which consists in measuring the boy and finding some place in the economy where he can be fitted; chopping him down to make him fit; or neglecting him if they can't find his slot. Personnel directors do not much try to scrutinize the economy in order to find some activity which is a real opportunity for the boy, and creating an opportunity if they can't find one. To do this would be a horrendous task; I am not sure if it could be done if we wanted to. But the question is whether anything less makes sense if we mean to speak seriously about the troubles of young men.

But we are not only organized for possible war, we are also organized for "success." By and large, the progeny of parents enjoying upper-level incomes have learned that the key to their own future lies in clever salesmanship. An affluent society which is nevertheless stratified by disproportionate privileges of wealth is bound to feature the advantages of "middle class" existence; neither the world of the leaders of industry nor the world of the workers offers the prospect of gaining "so much from so little effort." Here we are

reminded of a passage from a novel by Vin Packer, called *5:45 to Suburbia*, in which a flash-back on the development of character in an up-and-coming young man is expressed in these terms:

Wally Keene liked the feeling of success, and though in his own mind he was—as he thought of it—"on the middle rung working up," he was acquainted with the feeling, adjusted, he believed, to its inevitability, for he had, not always, but certainly more often than not, gotten what he set out to get....

As a boy, he knew success and its feeling, both at home and later in prep school.

It was easy for him to say things quite frankly, because the things he said he did not necessarily mean. He said them for their effect. So that he could walk up to another lad quite confidently and allow: "You know, you have a damn nice pitching arm. I think you'll go places," or "Good comment in Lit this morning, Bill. You're a brain. I envy you," (said to a duller student than he was) or "You're more mature than most around here," (said to some bullheaded nitwit) until eventually, through his outspokenness and his self-confidence (he never let it seem to be the cocky kind, but tempered it with a faint suggestion of humility), he gained the stature of mediator, counselor, non-academic philosopher. In short, leader.

College found him accepted in the best clubs, dating the most beautiful girls, and having the good sense in his senior year to become engaged to one who was not as beautiful as she was potentially valuable. Susan Keene's father had the best kind of wealth, the inherited kind, and though he was Spartan enough in temperament to admire anyone who started "from the bottom," he was not at all averse to financing a son-in-law who could prove he more appropriately deserved the milieu at the top.

Wally Keene liked the feeling of success and he counted on it, counted on a rapid rise. . . .

The most serious aspect of such an attitude of mind is its complacent acceptance as a right and good way to behave—a kind of "Americanism" essential to progress and prosperity. Many of the young, moreover, have nothing in their background to help them understand criticism of this attitude, which is common among their parents. It is thought of, not as hypocrisy, but as "good policy."

A study of "Bigotry in Schoolchildren," reported on by H. D. Schmidt, furnishes ground for the belief that it is in the home that most attitudes involving prejudice are developed. Drawing on research undertaken at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, the writer calls attention to the fact that "in the development of a child sentiment precedes knowledge." Although Mr. Schmidt is principally concerned with the development and retention of racial prejudice, he touches, by implication, on all other forms of mental conditioning. To paraphrase: Whatever conflicts or struggles have been the lot of the parents give the clue, in terms of sentiment, to the social, political and ethical attitudes which the children will develop. Orthodox religion seems to have no bearing upon the prejudice, for its routine conventionality tends to leave every form of prejudice untouched. Further, in either the too-affluent society or the religiously-conditioned home, the matter of appearances appears to be most important.

One reason for reviewing these negative aspects of the environment confronting youth is to remind ourselves that we become truly human only when we acquire a distaste for superficiality. The problem for youth, as for every adult, is not that of winning friends and influencing people, but of discovering a form of endeavor that is worthy of some consecration.



FRONTIERS

RELIGION

SCIENCE

EDUCATION

The Living and the Dead

[This article is a portion of the Charles R. Redding Lecture delivered last December by Dr. W. F. G. Swann, for thirty-two years Director of the Bartol Research Foundation of the Franklin Institute, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The lecture appeared in full in the March 1960 number of the *Journal of the Franklin Institute* and was printed in part in the *Saturday Review* for June 4. We here reprint the SR version, by permission of SR, the *Journal*, and Dr. Swann.—Editors.]

"THE man in the Street" hears of the atomic bomb, so like an enlarged version of one of the urns of the Arabian Nights, urns from which, as a result of proper incantations, terrifying beings emerged. He learns that two apparently inert pieces of uranium of the same kind, on being brought suddenly into close proximity, explode in a manner such as to emulate all the furies of hell, pouring forth all sorts of evil things in the form of poisonous radioactive radiations and the like. It is as though these two pieces of metal, on being brought together, became infuriated by each other's presence and, in their anger, revealed all the evil that was within them. Indeed, from the standpoint of over-all results, the performance of these two innocent pieces of uranium surpasses, in immeasurable degree, all the mysteries described in the immortal book of Arabian fairy tales. And our man in the street, on witnessing the atomic bomb, might well say, "Here, at last, I find a real miracle—a miracle which can be repeated at will."

But the men of science tell him that they know all about what has happened and that there is no miracle. In this they play some deception on that layman, for, if they could reveal to him the picture of those more subtle atomic processes which are involved, he would be likely to exclaim: "But these processes in terms of which you explain the bomb are, to my way of thinking, miracles themselves." And the man of science, if honest with himself, will have no choice but to reply, "Yes, my friend, that is indeed true to your way of thinking; but to me, who has lived with these sub-atomic phenomena so long, the phenomena have ceased to carry with them the stigma of the word miracle."

You will perhaps be unhappy about my definition of the word miracle. You may prefer to regard a miracle as a thing of such unusual occurrence, that the fact of its having occurred at all is open to doubt. You can then maintain that atomic phenomena are not miracles because they are always occurring, and their continual occurrence provides, in its totality, for the phenomena evident around us. If you say this, I fear that the Lord hath delivered you into mine hands; for in this sense, practically all the phenomena of the atomic world would indeed be miracles to any supposed inhabitants of the atom.

Consider the emission of an X-ray from an atom. Even if, in imagination, you lived on one of the atoms which

compose the part of the X-ray tube from which the X-rays come, so rare would be the emission of a ray from an individual atom that you would be put in an atomic lunatic asylum if, as a resident of such an atom, you maintained that any such phenomena had ever occurred. Only because there are so many atoms does the physicist observe a strong emission of X-rays from the X-ray tube. And so, what is a miracle to the resident of the atom is no longer a miracle to him who observes a multitude of atoms.

A cosmic ray, passing through this room, detaches an electron from an atom here and there. By observing the detachment of the electron we investigate and measure the rays. Yet, to the individual atom, this theft of an electron by a cosmic ray is such a rare event that the chance of its happening to any particular atom in the period of, let us say a day, is no more than the chance that one of us would be murdered in that day if, with the earth at its present population, only one murder were committed in three hundred years. So it is with all the happenings of atomic physics. Yet it is these miraculous happenings which, in their totality, produce all the interesting things which our coarse-grained senses observe. And to these coarse-grained senses there is no miracle.

In science, we have sufficient respect for the design of the universe to believe that there is a unified scheme covering all realms of phenomena, and indeed, in the last analysis, the affairs of mankind as a particular case.

While there is much yet to be done in correlating and enriching all that is known about what we call the material world, I feel that before long, we shall have to face the problem of the nature of life and of all that goes with it, if real progress is to be made. We cannot, for ever, keep the laws of dead matter separated from those of living things; for after all, everything that happens as a result of our efforts in the utilization of what we have already learned must be initiated by the mind of man. I can imagine the heavens to go on their courses without any attention from mankind. I can be happy in the thought of a continual process of activity which, in its gross aspects at any rate, follows the kind of deterministic behavior which, a hundred years ago, might have been thought to be the "way of life" of all nature. But if, today, I make an atomic bomb which does drastic things, it is I who formed the decision to make it; and in so doing, I interfere with what would have happened had I not made the decision. At this point, the mind of man seizes upon the otherwise smooth running of things, and, in some way, that which is in my mind interlocks with inanimate nature to direct its course.

In facing the necessity of bringing harmony into realms which today stand apart, what has the experience of the past taught us? We have a clue in what has happened in

the domain of atomic structure. There was a time when atoms were regarded as indivisible things, without any properties other than were provided by empiricism as demanded by the laws of chemistry. No progress was being made in understanding the laws which related the elements to one another. Even the periodic table was an unfathomable mystery. Then came the discovery of the electron and the proton, two entities whose existence had not before been recognized, and at least a promise of further understanding was achieved. However, a barrier to further progress was soon reached. Many had wished to invoke the possibility of another kind of particle—a neutral particle—but conservative science hesitated to accept this. The principle that all atomic forces were electrical had almost come to be regarded as self-evident. How, then, could a neutral particle exert a force on anything or indeed, how could it be influenced by anything?

In the spirit of the times such a particle had to be regarded as a completely dead entity. And when the neutron at last was discovered, science became disturbed not so much by the new particle itself as by the fact that the presence of the neutron represented a new set of relationships between things. One had to admit what are called *nuclear forces* as distinct from electromagnetic forces—a new world of law and order. And what was more astonishing, one had to provide for interlocking relationships between this new domain of phenomena and the old domain which was so unlike it.

In contemplating the harmonization of life with what we call the laws of inanimate matter, I expect to find a new set of laws, laws which do not deny anything we had before except in the denial of the claim of those laws to finality.

I do not expect it to be necessary to find a new *particle* which will cement the old materialistic realm with the realm of life and all that goes with it, but I may expect to find the formal recognition of some kind of a new entity differing from those which we have encountered in physics. I do not necessarily expect that this entity will be something which can be described in terms of space and time, although I shall expect it to be accompanied by well-defined laws of operation which provide, not only for the activities peculiar to its own purposes, but for the possibility of cementing it logically with the knowledge of the past.

We must not be too astonished at the invocation of an entity which does not call for expression in terms of space and time. After all, I may speak of such things as good and evil without accompanying them with coordinates x, y, z, t , to express where they are and when they were there. For the sophisticated physicist, I may recall that much that is spoken of in the quantum theory of physics has little to do with the expression of all relevant concepts in terms of some thing or things having positions at certain times.

I shall not be surprised to find the new entity playing a part in the survival of pattern, so dominant in living things. I hesitate to limit its potentialities by giving it a name already appropriated and endowed with properties of vagueness too foggy to be permitted in a scientific discussion, and so I will not call it by the name "soul." If it is to be of service, it must not shrink away from its duties and take refuge as part of high-sounding sentences. Its functions and modes of operation must be well-defined and it is only natural that

in conventional science it will have to go through the process of skeptic criticism which has fallen to the lot of all of its predecessors in the materialistic realm. I should expect to find it play a role in those phenomena which for long have lain in the borderland between what is accepted by all and what is accepted only by few, even though representatives of the few may be found in all periods of man's history. I refer to such things as extrasensory perception, the significance of the immortality of man, clairvoyance, and allied phenomena, and the significance of the fact that our universe exhibits what we may call a planned design, whether or not we are willing to admit the hazy notion of a planner, or say what we mean by that postulate.

In discussing such matters I think it is essential to avoid all theological doctrine as a starting point. I would rather see a theological doctrine emerge spontaneously as part of the over-all scheme of nature, than I would see the workings of nature forced into a frame provided by a preconceived theological doctrine as a starting point.

I would hope that in this more comprehensive philosophy no man would have occasion to forsake any of the ideals which in the past he had fostered. When this condition arrives, those things for which the mind and soul long shall no longer appear veiled in nebulous shrouds of uncertainty, but shall stand out as jewels adorning the greater universe in all its splendor.

W. F. G. SWANN

THE PEOPLE CHOOSE

(Continued)

grams, if they had the power to do so. But these people don't own the newspapers and the broadcasting networks. Their talents, we might say, run to taste and intelligence instead of to the acquisition of economic power. So they are critics and reformers, not proprietors of the mass media.

But if they are right—and they certainly *sound* right, a lot of the time—what should be done? Take the papers and the air channels away from mercenary and irresponsible proprietors and give them to the people with the taste and the judgment? That won't work, because it means the use of coercive power, and if there is anything which at once destroys taste and good judgment, it is trying to enforce it with coercive power.

The first thing to do, surely, is to get a little clarity concerning certain large questions about human beings in the mass—questions we have been deterred from considering because of the quantitative measures on which the democratic process relies. Why, to make a beginning, are the differences among human beings almost a taboo subject for discussion? They are taboo because, in the past, theories of human differences have been used to justify caste and class societies and hierarchical systems of political control. Recognition of these differences seems to betray a desire to give power to a ruling aristocracy.

But what we want, nevertheless, is to have our best men in the sensitive jobs—the jobs concerned with disseminating the facts of current events and with providing impartial discussion of their meaning. And we want this without arming them with political (or coercive) authority.

For many years, the chief criticism of the mass media has been that they are too "commercial." Their role in our

society is to "move goods." But if they fail to move goods, they go out of business. If, then, we are to have communication media which devote all their energies to the primary task of informing the public, they will have to have another economic base. They must be freed of the obligation of moving goods. An economic base founded on political power is ruled out, since that would make the mass media into organs of government propaganda. The only remaining alternative, in our society, is the privately financed non-profit enterprise, which would "compete" with the commercial press for the attention and support of the public. The only way to get better newspapers and radio and television stations is to start them. The only way to show that the public will approve a better quality of news reporting and public affairs discussion is to offer it to the people as a public service. Somebody will have to put up the money to do this, just as somebody had to put up the money for many of the first public libraries in the United States. Somebody had to put up the money for our great hospitals because they thought hospitals were important to have. Our universities, also, began this way. It has always been a prerogative of the citizens of the United States to perform a public service as a private enterprise.

Non-profit newspapers may make mistakes in their experimental stage. They may make them all their natural lives. But how can they possibly be as bad as the commercial press? Let the men who want to move goods, move goods, but by some other means than depraving the vital organs of public communication.

No doubt a lot of the bad habits of the commercial press would rub off on the non-profit newspapers. It might take fifty years to get rid of the commercial taint in communications. There would also be a lot of bitter criticism of the new, non-commercial press as "un-American." But no great and good innovation in the affairs of America has ever escaped such condemnation at the start. If the commercial press doesn't like the kind of competition it gets from the non-commercial press, it can meet the competition with better reporting and more intelligent editorial comment. The public, in any event, will be the gainer.

Ours, we are told, is an "affluent society." It ought to be rich enough to try an experiment of this sort. Who could lose by it? Who could be hurt?

Non-profit newspapers could start small. Tests could be made on a regional basis. Without advertising, the papers would be compact, easier to handle, easier to read. The thorough job they do of reporting and analysis of the news would at once gain them circulation among the most influential members of the community. And eventually, what the most influential members of the community do is followed by others. The appeal of *intelligence* might command far more support than is now suspected.

The stimulus to journalism provided by such ventures would be immeasurably great. Every serious, working newspaperman has dreamed of such a paper. He would work for less to be on such a paper, although that is not a thing to emphasize. The enthusiasm of the people engaged in this work would stir the entire cultural community. Something like this happened, incidentally, in the San Francisco Bay area of California, following the establishment of

Reminder

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KPFA, the first Pacifica Foundation radio station, which was started some ten or twelve years ago in Berkeley. The people who started this station had no money. They had the idea of listener-supported radio, with no advertising over the air, no commercials, and they raised the money by ringing door-bells. The men who rang the door-bells hated being "fund-raisers"—who wouldn't?—but they did it, and now KPFA is virtually self-supporting. It took eight years for the Berkeley station to find enough subscribers who *voluntarily* pay a fee every year to keep the station going without subsidy. They could listen without paying, and doubtless many people did and still do, but those who pay of their own will are now sufficiently numerous to balance the budget.

This venture in non-commercial radio illustrates our contention that the people with the taste and with the intelligence and the sense of responsibility must, in a free society, *do* what needs to be done. Any project concerned with truth, fact, and meaning must be carried on for its own sake. It can't be done by government, which is bound by something called "national self-interest." It can't be done by business, which is bound by something called "private self-interest." It has to be done by the few, who are willing to act in the public interest, because they care about the public interest and are the only ones who, in the last analysis, are able to recognize consistently what is in the public interest.

It would be a great help to all undertakings of this general character and intent if it could be realized that they will come about in no other way. People have to do these things themselves. To see this is to have clarity about the means to human betterment. You can't buy the truth. You can't sell it. You can't pass a law to get the truth spread around. You have to find it yourself, spread it yourself, and maybe, for a while, pay all the bills yourself. If you try some other way, somebody else will eventually take the truth away from you and hand you some merchandise to sell, or give you a uniform and not even a choice of weapons. You'll be *told* how to think and what to do.

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